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ACTION AF-01

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|------|---------|--------|---------|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| INFO | LOG-00 | AID-01 | CIAE-00 | SMEC-00 | OASY-00 | DODE-00 | DOEE-00 |
| | DS-00 | EB-01 | EUR-01 | OIGO-01 | H-01 | INM-02 | TEDE-00 |
| | INR-00 | IO-16 | JUSE-00 | L-01 | ADS-00 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 |
| | OIC-02 | OMB-01 | PA-02 | PM-00 | PRS-01 | P-01 | SNP-00 |
| | SP-00 | SR-00 | SS-00 | STR-01 | TRSE-00 | T-00 | PMB-00 |
| | DSCC-00 | PRM-10 | PRME-01 | DRL-09 | G-00 | /053W | |
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R 121647Z JUL 94
FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4061
INFO USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USIA WASHDC 1125

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DEPT FOR DAS BRYNN, AF/C, DSS/OP, DS/OP/AF, USAID
DEPT PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR M. MCLARTY, P. LADER
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EUCOM FOR J3
LONDON FOR MCKINLEY; PARIS FOR PERLOW
YAOUNDE FOR DAO

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PREF, PREL, PHUM, BY
SUBJECT: CAMPS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS; RWANDA BORDER
CROSSING IS QUIET

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1. TO GET A FEEL AT FIRSTHAND OF THE CONDITIONS IN CAMPS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR PROVIDING TINDER FOR AN EXPLOSION HERE, REFUGEE OFFICER JULIE O'REAGAN, USAID OFFICER MIKE JUNGE, AND I VISITED SIX CAMPS IN THE AREA AROUND BUJUMBURA ON JULY 10. WE THEN TRAVELLED TO THE BORDER CROSSING LOCATED BETWEEN BUGARAMA, RWANDA AND RUGOMBO, IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF BURUNDI.

2. THE CAMPS WERE DIRTY, PRIMITIVE, SADDENING. BUT PROBABLY NOT GREATLY DIRTIER OR MORE PRIMITIVE THAN THE SURROUNDING BUJUMBURA NEIGHBORHOODS - WHICH IS A TRUTH EVEN MORE SADDENING. THE TWO HUTU CAMPS WERE WORST; THE THREE TUTSI CAMPS SLIGHTLY BETTER; THE CAMP FOR RWANDAN ORPHANS, OPENED LAST WEEK, PROBABLY THE BEST. ONLY IT WAS OPERATED BY WESTERNERS, WITH STANDARDS OF HYGIENE NEARER TO THOSE IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. THIS CAMP, ADMINISTERED BY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS WORKING FOR WESTERN NGO'S, WAS ALSO THE BEST ORGANIZED. THE OTHER

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FIVE RECEIVE THEIR FOOD FROM WORLD FOOD PROGRAM, BUT RECEIVE NEITHER MEDICAL AID, ELECTRICITY, NOR ATTENTION FROM THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT. ONE RESIDENT TOLD US THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN A SINGLE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL DURING HIS FOUR MONTHS IN THE CAMP.

3. THE CONDITIONS RANGED FROM DIRTY TO SQUALID; THE REPORTED NUMBERS FROM 290 TO 2,800 IN THE DIFFERENT CAMPS. THEIR COMPLAINTS RANGED FROM LACK OF ACCESSIBLE WATER TO LACK OF MEDICINE AND BLANKETS. BUT SURPRISINGLY, THEY DID NOT (WITH ONE EXCEPTION), EVEN WHEN ASKED, COMPLAIN OF LACK OF SECURITY OR MISTREATMENT BY NEIGHBORS OR THE MILITARY. AND DESPITE THEIR WRETCHED CONDITIONS, THEY SEEMED NEITHER HOSTILE NOR INCENDIARY. DISPLACED AND UNHAPPY, YES, BUT MORE DEFEATED THAN ANGRY.

4. THESE CAMPS WERE NOT AMONG THOSE CONSISTING OF STICKS AND PLASTIC SHEETING ON HILLSIDES. ALL THESE WERE IN LARGELY WINDOWLESS BUILDINGS, WITH DIRT OR CEMENT FLOORS, AND OFTEN WITHOUT ELECTRICITY. SOME WERE IN SCHOOLS WHICH MAY NEED TO BE REOCCUPIED IN FALL. IN ALL THE INHABITANTS FELT SO LONG IGNORED THAT THEY GREETED US THREE AMERICANS WITH SURPRISE LIKE THAT OF THE GHOSTS OF HADES ON SEEING AENEAS VISIT THEM LIVE AND BREATHING IN THAT HELL.

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5. THE RWANDA BORDER: ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

ON JULY 10, AS ON THE PREVIOUS SUNDAY, I DROVE TO THE
RWANDAN BORDER. ON JULY 3, I HAD GONE BEYOND KAYANZA
TO KANYARU HAUT; THIS TIME, TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF
BURUNDI, TO THE BORDER IN CIBITOKÉ PROVINCE.

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ON JULY 3, I HAD SEEN LESS THAN A HALF DOZEN BURUNDI
TROOPS AT THE BORDER CHECKPOINT, AND THEY WERE TALKING
AMICABLY WITH THEIR RWANDAN COUNTERPARTS AS THEY STOOD
TOGETHER ON THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE. THE BORDER
CROSSING NEAR RUGAMBO, ON JULY 10, WAS EVEN MORE QUIET.
THE ONLY ACTIVITY WAS THE ANIMATED LAUGHTER OF
BRIGHTLY-DRESSED ZAIRIAN WOMEN CHUCKLING OVER THEIR
CASH RECEIVED UPON SELLING SACKS OF POTATOES, WHICH
FILLED THE BEDS OF THREE PICK-UP TRUCKS. RWANDA HAD
ONE GOR SOLDIER AND TWO GENDARMES; BURUNDI TWO
GENDARMES AND ONE CUSTOMS OFFICER. THE RWANDAN SMILES
FADED WHEN THEY REALIZED THEY WERE ONLY MEETING THE
AMERICAN AMBASSADOR AND TWO COLLEAGUES; THEIR SMILES
WERE PROMPTED BY THE THOUGHT THAT WE WERE FRENCH.
6. THE ONE BURUNDI BORDER GUARD AND THE BURUNDI CUSTOMS
OFFICIAL HAD SO LITTLE ACTIVITY THAT THEY INSISTED ON
SHOWING

US THE HOT SPRINGS LOCATED JUST 200 YARDS AWAY.
AS WE WALKED PAST A TINY COTTON FIELD, THEY ASKED IF WE
HAD EVER BEFORE SEEN COTTON. THEY HAD HAD PRECIOUS
LITTLE EXCITEMENT, AND NO MILITARY OR REFUGEE ACTIVITY
OVER THE PAST 6 MONTHS. THE ONLY ACTIVITY THEY HAD
OBSERVED WAS A FRENCH OBSERVATION PLANE THAT THE
PREVIOUS DAY HAD FLOWN LOW (ONLY 100 FEET ABOVE THE
GROUND, THEY CLAIMED) ALONG THE BORDER. CLEARLY, THE

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ATTITUDES OF THE BURUNDIANS TOWARD THE FRENCH DIFFERED
FROM THAT OF THE RWANDANS. WHEN ASKED, THEY THOUGHT IT
POSSIBLE THAT CYANGUGU MIGHT HAVE REFUGEES. THUS,
ON JULY 10, AT 5:00 PM, AT THE BORDER CROSSING AT RUGAMBO,
WE CAN REPORT THAT IT WAS ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

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